One of the most important aspects of photography is to compose your frame properly. Composition is somewhat subjective, there are no clear rules as to what photo is properly composed and which is not. Use your viewfinder for what it is made for—to compose your image. However, a thing to remember when you take a picture is that the viewfinder of any camera (SLR cameras in particular) shows less than the full frame. Usually the viewfinder shows only 90% to 95% of the frame. It is important to keep this in mind when composing the frame, especially when you are trying to keep objects out of your frame.

Student Unit Organizer

Composing an Image

(using the viewfinder)

DUE DATE

SCORE

**CRITICAL QUESTION(s) / ARTIST STATEMENT:**

1. **What are the principles to composing an image?**
2. **How does the rule of thirds make a composition interesting?**
3. **What would you have done differently?**
4. **How do you feel about the overall completion of this assignment?**

Visual Art—Delaune

Student Unit Organizer

**ASSESSMENT(s):**

* **Rule of thirds**
* **Overall composition**
* **Overall capturing of photographs**
* **Participation**
* **Contact sheet**
* **Artist Statement/**

**Critical Questions**

**OBJECTIVE(s):**

* **Using the viewfinder (LCD screen)**
* **Framing the Image**
* **Selecting the viewpoint**
* **Rule of thirds**
* **Tips on capturing a good photograph**

### Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### 

### Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* **Guidelines to composing a photograph:**
* Rule of thirds
* Get close
* Framing the Image
* Selecting the Point of view (angles)
* Leading lines (perspective)

1. Rule of Thirds:

* **What is it?**

A principle of composition used by artist/photographers using the rule of thirds places the main subject off center—resulting in a more dynamic and interesting photo.

* **What does it look like?**

Divide the image into 9 equal parts by 2 equally-spaced horizontal lines and 2 equally-spaced vertical lines.

* **How is it used?**

The 4 points from the intersecting lines can be used to align features/figures. Aligning the photograph with these points creates more tension, energy and interest.

* **How can it be applied?**

1. Lining up the subjects with the guide lines
2. Place the horizon on the top or bottom line instead of the center
3. Allow linear features to flow from section to section
4. Get Close:

When you snap a shot—move in closer for a better shot. Having your subject almost fill the frame helps your viewer understand and appreciate your photo. Details are more interesting than an overall view.

Compose your picture so it contains only the visual information you want. Try to get as close as you can to your subject so that it fills the viewfinder. Telephoto lenses are great to use for zooming in on a subject, but it is better to get as physically close to your subject as possible rather than zoom in on it. If you are showing people involved in an activity, be sure that you are close enough to be able to see what they are doing.

If desired, use the background to share the emphasis with the main subject by following the [rule of thirds](http://www.aea1.k12.ia.us/lois/ruleofthirds.html). Be careful, though, because busy backgrounds can compete with your subject, so keep the background plain and simple. Watch for poles, lines or other objects that could appear to be projecting from a person's head.

*Remember: Fill the frame with your subject.*

1. Framing the Image:

To create a unified effect you need to decide how best to arrange the elements making up the image—what to include or omit, the angle at which to shoot, and how to show one subject element in relation to others. Just as a painter must work within the dimensions of his canvas, a photographer uses the camera viewfinder as the creative space within which to build a pleasing composition. One way of composing a picture is to use a frame within a frame. In order to emphasize the main subject of a picture you can show it surrounded and balanced by another element.

Framing is a very simple trick that will make your photos look more professional. Use tree branches, bushes, part of a building or even a person to frame your subject and give the photo a 3-D look. Framing is especially effective on overcast days when the sky is white or gray. Position yourself so that a branch, for example, covers most of the dull sky; such positioning may also result in a much more interesting point of view.

*Remember: Frame your subject for a professional look.*

1. Selecting the Point of View (Angles):

The viewpoint from which you photograph a subject determines the apparent relationship between all the objects included in the frame and of those objects to their surroundings.

The only accurate way to determine the effectiveness of a particular viewpoint is by checking its appearance through the viewfinder. Looking at a scene with the naked eye, you are aware of a mass of peripheral information surrounding the area of interest. The viewfinder, however, shows the scene with clear-cut edges as it will appear in the finished photograph.

Look for ways to simplify the picture by positioning yourself to exclude extraneous detail, or for unusual ways to present the subject. While looking through the camera, try crouching down so that you are lower than the subject; or try standing on a small stepladder so that you can look down on it. Even by simply moving to one side you can show subject elements in a different way.

There is no law that says all pictures have to be taken from eye level and straight on. By taking a picture from a different angle, you can produce a totally new feeling, mood or effect.

The worm's eye view can be pretty interesting. By lying down on your stomach, you can get flowers in the foreground to [frame your subject](http://www.aea1.k12.ia.us/lois/framing.html). If you are taking pictures of small children or pets, getting the camera down on their level can improve results. You can also avoid cluttered or ugly background by changing your point of view.

Climbing up on things and looking down from a high point of view offers lots of different opportunities. With people looking up at the camera, you will see just their faces without having to pose their bodies or lining them up. From above, you can also use grass or flowers as a background.

Speaking of lineups, rather than having your subjects lined up all the time, position them in a relaxed or informal manner. Have them turn their shoulders slightly so they do not appear so stiff. Use something like a rock or fence for a prop to position them around.

*Remember: There is no law that says all pictures have to be taken from eye level and straight on.*

1. Leading Lines (Perspective):

A leading line can be almost anything: a road, path, sidewalk, fence, river, hedge, tree line or shadow. You will not find a strong leading line around every subject, but you should look for them if they are there and take advantage of them. Lines in a picture should lead into, not out of, the picture, and they should lead your eye toward the main subject.

Sometimes it is a matter of choosing the right angle or [point of view](http://www.aea1.k12.ia.us/lois/pointofview.html) to make leading lines lead into the picture. Starting a leading line from the corner of your picture will often improve composition. *Remember: Watch for strong lines that lead to your subject.*

Summary:

* **Tips on capturing a good photograph**:
* Be quick
* Focus on your subject (depth of field)
* Sharp picture
* Lighting

1. Be Quick:

Be Quick—“Shoot first, ask questions later!” don’t worry about waiting for the right time or taking too many pictures—(that’s the beauty of digital photography! What didn’t work can be deleted.) You can’t retake a scene that needs to be posed it will not look spontaneous—it will look planed/staged. Always have your camera ready and waiting for those spontaneous moments.

*Remember: Think quick and be ready.*

1. Focus on your subject (Depth of Field):

Decide what the main interest is and center your efforts on getting the best photo of this subject. Practice depth of field—shoot with different apertures.

* Smaller f-stop (shallow depth of field) focuses all attention on subject to make it stand out against a blurry background.
* Bigger f-stop (greater depth of field) make everything appear in focus.

*Remember: What is it that you want in focus?*

1. Sharp Pictures:

The most important point to remember when taking pictures is to keep the camera steady. To guarantee the sharpest pictures, use a tripod or set the camera on a solid, flat surface.

When that is not possible, follow these tips:

* Stand with your feet firmly on the floor or ground with your weight distributed evenly on both feet. This will keep you from swaying or weaving.
* Grip the camera firmly with both hands.
* Brace your arms against your body and the camera against your head.
* Press the shutter release as smoothly as possible. Jabbing at it could make the camera drop, resulting in a picture with the subjects' heads cut off.

*Remember: Always hold the camera rock steady and press the shutter smoothly.*

1. Lighting:

Light is a basic ingredient for good photography. No light results in no picture. By considering your light source, you can create a variety of photos and moods.

There are four kinds of lighting that come into play when taking photos:

* [Front light](http://www.aea1.k12.ia.us/lois/lighting.html#front)
* [Side light](http://www.aea1.k12.ia.us/lois/lighting.html#side)
* [Back light](http://www.aea1.k12.ia.us/lois/lighting.html#back)
* [Flat light](http://www.aea1.k12.ia.us/lois/lighting.html#flat)

**Front Light**

Most pictures use front lighting, where the light falls directly on the subject. This kind of light generally insures bright, well-exposed pictures, but it can cause people to squint as they look directly into a light source, such as the sun.

**Side Light**

Just as it sounds, side lighting means that the subject is lighted from the side. This kind of lighting generally casts shadows on half of the subject and produces what photographers and artists call modeling, where the surface of the subject reveals any ripples, bumps or hollows.

Scenic photos of landscapes are much prettier when the sun is lower in the sky, resulting in side lighting. The hours from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on bright, sunny days are the worst times to shoot outdoor photos. Early and late hours yield more saturated colors and interesting shadows that create textures or patterns.

**Back Light**

When the source of light is in back of or directly above your subject, you probably will not get much detail in the subject, but you will get a strong silhouette and sometimes a halo effect. Back light can be very dramatic, but it can cause shadows and underexposed photos. Be aware of backlighting if the subject is in front of a window.

If your subject is lighted from the back and you want to see details, use your flash to fill in the shadows. This is also a good idea if your subjects are wearing hats or caps that cast shadows on their faces when the light source is directly above them.

**Flat Light**

Flat light occurs when the sky is hazy or overcast, so that it appears white or light gray rather than blue. There is no apparent direction to the light, so there are basically no shadows. This is the kind of light professional photographers prefer because they can control the light on their subjects using flash, if necessary.

Flat light is very flattering, so it is the perfect time to take close-ups of faces. Flat light is softer than bright sunlight, so you will get more natural smiles because your subjects will not have to squint.

*Remember: Consider your light source to create the effect you want.*

***“It is good to be somewhat critical of your own work, rather than being satisfied too quickly. But you should never be discouraged. This way you always keep improving your skills and end up with better pictures and techniques.”***

Summary:

Assignment:

First you will read and annotate this packet in OneNote. Failure to do so will result in a loss of points. An understanding of how to compose an image is needed before moving on.

Your first assignment will be focused on the **rule of thirds—composition**. You are to take at least 72 pictures (equivalent to 2 rolls of 36 exposures). There will be no cropping or digital manipulation. Photoshop will not be used. You must think about how you want your image to look—and arrange it in the viewfinder before you shoot.

You will photograph SSA and the subject matter of your choice. This assignment is a great opportunity to photograph SSA for next year’s planner cover. All entries will be given to the administrative team for the choice. You do not have to enter a picture for the planner. However, you do have to have at least one for this assignment.

You will need to create a contact sheet of all of your images using Picasa, saving it as first initial, last name contact 1—(ex: mdelaune contact 1). You will select your top three images to submit for a grade at least one must be of SSA. Save your images as first initial, last name, number—(ex: mdelaune1, mdelaune2, mdelaune3). You will create a subfolder (first initial, last name) in our class folder on the server. Make sure you upload 3 images and a contact sheet. When the assignment is complete and images are submitted you will complete and print the rubric and critical question(s)/artist statement. Making sure name is on the rubric you will turn it into your class folder on my desk.

* **Concept:** Rule of thirds
* **Subject matter:** SSA and your choice
* Need one contact sheet of at least 72 pictures
* Print your top three to submit for a grade: 1 photo of SSA, 2 photos of your choice

Notes:

**CRITICAL QUESTION(s) / ARTIST STATEMENT:**

1. **What are the principles to composing an image?**
2. **How does the rule of thirds make a composition interesting?**
3. **What would you have done differently?**
4. **How do you feel about the overall completion of this assignment?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Write the number under the “Rate Yourself” column that best shows how well you feel you completed that criterion for the assignment. | **Excellent-Good**  **(10-9)** | **Average** **(8)** | **Needs**  **Improvement**    **(7)** | **Unsatisfactory**  **(6-0)** | **Student** | **Teacher** |
| Criteria 1- Rule of thirds: *Does your finished product display concept of rule of thirds? (rate per photo)* | Photograph demonstrates an excellent example of the rule of thirds. | Photograph demonstrates an adequate example of the rule of thirds. | Photograph is somewhat an example of the rule of thirds. Student needs further assistance in conceptualizing the rule. | Photograph does not demonstrate the rule of thirds. Student needs further assistance in conceptualizing the rule. |  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| Criteria 2-  **Overall composition :**  *Do the elements of art and principles of design contribute to the overall composition?*  *(rate per photo)* | Photograph’s over all composition is excellent. Placement, clarity, principles and elements all contribute to the composition. | Photograph’s over all composition is adequate. Placement, clarity, principles and elements all contribute to the composition. | Photograph’s over all composition is fair. Placement, clarity, principles and elements somewhat contribute to the composition. | Photograph’s over all composition is excellent. Placement, clarity, principles and elements all contribute to the composition. |  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| Criteria 3- **Overall capturing of photographs:**  *Do all three photographs capture the viewers attention?(rate as group)* | Overall—the three photographs are exceptional. They are eye catching. They display a vast amount of originality, creativeness, and artistic qualities. | Overall—the three photographs are eye catching. They display originality, creativeness, and artistic qualities. | Overall—the three photographs are somewhat eye catching. They-to some extent-display originality, creativeness, and artistic qualities. | Overall—the three photographs do not catch the viewer’s eye. They do not display originality, creativeness, and artistic qualities. |  |  |
| Criteria 4-  **Participation:**  *Did you use class time efficiently? Did you clean up your area? Did you annotate your packet?* | Excellent use of class time. Area kept extremely clean.  Equipment was taken care of. Excellent annotation of packet. | Good use of class time. Area kept somewhat clean.  Equipment was taken care of. Good annotation of packet. | Used class time inefficiently. Area kept fairly clean.  Equipment was taken care of. Fair annotation of packet. | Was not productive in class. Project is incomplete. Area was not kept clean. Equipment was not put away properly. Annotation of packet needs improvement. |  |  |
| Criteria 5-  **Contact Sheet:**  *Does your contact sheet display at least 72 images?* | Contact sheet displays at least 72 images and all are appropriate for assignment. | Contact sheet displays at least 65 images and all are appropriate for assignment. | Contact sheet displays at least 72 images and some are suitable for the assignment. | Contact sheet displays less than 65 images. |  |  |
| Criteria 6-  **Artist Statement/Critical Questions:**  *Did you complete the questions provided for the artist statement in complete sentences?* | All four questions are answered clearly and in complete sentences. | Three questions are answered clearly and in complete sentences. | Two questions are answered clearly and in complete sentences. | One question is answered clearly and in complete sentences. |  |  |

**Teacher Comments:**

Total: